1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

workers, was founded as an ordinary agricultural village not more than about sixty years ago. But such opportunities decreased throughout the nineteenth and this century. One inevitable result was to increase wealth differences and to make them more permanent.

A major consequence of increased wealth differences has been the strain placed on internal solidarity by "envy" (*hisa*; Hindi: *hinsa*) and even more by fear of "envy." What this term conveys is concealed malicious intent based upon desire for what another possesses. Though Santal society has long been plagued with accusations of witchcraft, the notion that its practice is almost invariably deliberate and that it arises from envy is of modern origin. Though it is recognized that men may be "envious," it is thought that females most often are guilty and that it is only they who practice witchcraft. Fertile grounds for envy, and attendant witchcraft, appeared when wealthy Santal began using their capital to hire other Santal, to loan money, paddy, and seed at interest, to buy forest land, and even in a few cases to invest in various small-scale enterprises. Relations arising from these investments are often strained and a source of resentment. Envy also arises from observation of what wealth procures in terms of traditional Santal pleasures and from its use in settling disputes.

Aside from the exacerbation of "envy," which increased wealth differences produced, the market imposed other, more general strains. It is difficult to square the basic reciprocity of relations in a kin society like that of the Santal with the impersonal and contractual relations of the market. Though the Santal struggle over land with as much ferocity as any peasants, they find it hard to insist on strictly market relations with other commodities, especially if pressed by kinsmen. A few Santal

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

not get drunk." Only if we had not seen women babbling in drunken brawl with the introduction of the outstill system in the Santal Parganas, and had not educated Santals at Baripada told us an opposite tale, . . we could thoroughly agree with her sex-patriotism, if such a phrase is permissible.

In house-construction, however, the division of labour has a nicety of its own, for, we learn, the women cannot sit upon a thatch except on pain of social excommunication. Such a pollution can only be expatiated by *Pujas* to the god "Dhòròm." So by its very necessity, house-building is man's preserve. A quite similar taboo attaches to them during funerals when according to custom, women cannot accompany the procession beyond the limits of the village where the death occurred.

Santal men engaged in the police service were highly spoken of by the Superintendent of Police, Mayurbhanj, as efficient, obedient and hard-working. Asked if their drink-habit was not a hindrance to them, he was emphatic that it did not matter at all. Mr. Mahanty, a Deputy Magistrate, spoke in a similar strain about his Santal employees.

And we have seen women at work, at work during the heat-wave of the Santal Parganas when all nature flies indoors, women singing at their work, punctual to a fault and hard-working to a painful extent. But, if her hour of work is seven a.m.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

has been going on for hundred years ever since civilisation dawned on the banks of the lower Ganges, and is yet far from complete, has led to a distinct uplift of the primitive peoples, and has been making highly desirable additions to the culture of the civilised community."

The Santal Character

Any one who comes in contact with the Santal, cannot but be struck with the heavy-built, bronze-bodied men and women. They are extremely hardy and can work incessantly with a smiling face. If the body is thus healthy, the mind is equally so. The truthfulness of the Santal is proverbial; the exceptions are due to his contact with the outside world. Accused in criminal courts the Santal would cut short everything by a clean confession. He is generally a meek fellow; but if he says "no" once, none can turn it into "yes."

Any one who has seen a Santal house, cannot but be struck with their habitual cleanliness. All things are kept neatly arranged. No dust can accumulate in the yards and all refuse and rubbish are neatly stowed away. The Santal is frank and open, honest and gentle. He does not understand the intricacies of life and craft and hypocrisy are not associated with him.

Bi Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ea. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

To all appearances, the Santal is a jolly good fellow who seems to carry out to its logical conclusion the principle, "eat, drink and be merry and care not for the morrow." Such seemingly epicurean nonchalance meets the observant eye during a good harvest or on the eve of their tribal festivals, when their gay abandon and the spontaneous overflow of their hearts are most evident.

Wherein lies the inner source of this joy? We may only quote to ourselves the famous line in an Upanishad which speaks of the birth of this universe of ours from joy perennial and eternal, perhaps the quintessence of the primordial cause. But this would not do in the case of the aboriginal Santals.

As we were ruminating over this Santal variety of hedonism, we came across a folk-song of the Santals that threw some light on this particular aspect of their mind and soul. We give below a free rendering of the poem:—

We eat and drink and make us merry,
We live our lives in joy divine ;
This earthly body gasps for breath,
What's the joy in the sleep of death?
There's joy in a wander-lust,
Joy in treks from land to land.
Like morning dew sparkling, fading,
Like dancing drops on glistening leaves,
Our lives in balance tremble here.

N Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (c.a. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

Whatever that may be, a sane admonition is now given to the erring by sensible parents and we understand that even married men are reproached by their parents or superiors if they indulge in adultery. 836 837 622

Santal women, in sexual matters, are the passive type found in the sex in general. If the term 'masochistic' can be applied to such a nature, they are undoubtedly so. We enquired to find out cases of women possessing a sadistic nature and gathered that instances of women beating men for economic reasons or domestic infidelity are not at all rare. But the witnesses stoutly maintained that such cases had nothing to do with the infliction of pain for the joy of it, and women as a sex do never take the lead in coitus or mastery in cohabitation. 562 157 [833]

But in married-life, should the husband be sexually unsatisfactory and fail habitually to satisfy the cravings of his wife for intercourse, the wife unfailingly sues for divorce and changes the husband for a more capable one. As one Santal puts it, "Failure to satisfy the sexual passion is the primary reason for divorces. Women can stand starvation in food as she can work and earn it, but if the husband fails to be a satisfactory partner in mating, she will leave him immediately." 833 586

The place of sex in the tribal life 831

Any one visiting a Santal rally at a dance or a festival, we dare say, will be struck with the

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

759 tioned in his introductory remarks the following, "When
278 in January 1890 he came out to the Santals, he was from the very first brought into contact with their medicine. It did not take long to be made aware of the Santals having medical treatment and medicines of their own, and of their belief in this. They might doubt the efficacy of certain medicine; but many were affirmed to be proved, as they called it.

It was not seldom to hear them profess to be able to cure what European doctors consider hopeless. In some cases (not hopeless ones) that came to the writer's notice is also seemed to be a fact that they had applied remedies of an efficacious nature. There is just the possibility that among the many ingredients used by them some few might be found that are not known to western science as medicines".

278 If these medicinal ingredients be scientifically analysed and tested, something of value might be found and thereby the modern medical science may be benefited.

•157 Above all the Santals are well known for their simplicity, honesty, straightforwardness, frankness and sincerity in thought and action. It is regrettable that
[178] these virtues of the Santals are gradually disappearing as a result of unregulated cultural change.

177 Thus from the above it appears that Hinduism has not brought any appreciable change in the Santal culture. Except the introduction of a few Hindu gods and goddesses no other change can be found in the Santal religion. In social sphere there is no effect. In material culture some minor changes have taken